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*South Vietnam: The Communists retain the military initiative in large areas of South Vietnam but no major new attacks have been reported.

Viet Cong forces are maintaining pressure on provincial capitals throughout IV Corps. Six of the capitals came under mortar and recoilless-rifle fire on 19-20 February. In Hue, progress is still slow in eliminating the stubbornly resisting enemy forces entrenched within the Citadel.

The situation inside Saigon has been relatively quiet, but sharp skirmishes continue on the outskirts of the city. It is possible that the Communists may be using the lull to infiltrate additional manpower into Saigon. A new flareup of terrorist action in the city is possible at any time.

Should the security situation deteriorate in Saigon, the Communists might try to move in with their substantial main force elements which are still within striking distance of the city.

Vice President Ky and General Nguyen Duc Thang resigned yesterday as chairman and chief of staff, respectively, of the national recovery task force.

Ky, who had been sensitive to criticism that he was using his role to increase his personal power, evidently believes that the recovery effort will encounter increasing bureaucratic difficulties under its new chairman, Prime Minister Loc, who is widely considered to be ineffective. Ky may also anticipate that this will also point up the weakness of government leadership and the need for himself to be given greater responsibility.

According to press reports, police in Saigon have arrested three prominent opposition figures: Buddhist militant Thich Tri Quang, former economy minister Au Truong Thanh, and defeated presidential candidate Truong Dinh Dzu. Previous allegations of Communist ties on

the part of the three men have never been substantiated and, unless convincing evidence can be produced, the government may become vulnerable to charges of using the emergency to crack down on its political enemies.

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USSR: The conflict between the government and the intellectual community is growing sharper.

Members of the literary underground are being tried in numerous cities throughout the USSR, according to US Embassy contacts in Moscow. These sources report widespread arrests for private circulation of literary works unacceptable to the authorities. This approach would seem to be a switch from the selective use of show trials, as was done in the case of writers Sinyavsky and Daniel two years ago, to a systematic prosecution of intellectual dissidents.

Last month's trial in Moscow of four young dissidents has drawn public protest from leading writers, artists, and scientists. They have expressed dismay at the secrecy of the new proceedings and the possibility of a return to the "shameful trials of the 1930s." Some intellectuals reportedly are preparing a petition to be given directly to President Podgorny. Composer Dmitry Shostakovich, a member of the party central committee and of the Supreme Soviet, is said to have agreed to present the petition. Several leading academicians and physicists allegedly are ready to support this action.

Apparently in an effort to quell the rising intellectual protest, the KGB has sought--so far with unknown results--to intimidate outspoken critics of the crack-down. A group of writers reportedly had planned to demonstrate in their Moscow club last Friday, but a warning from the KGB and the dispatch of a large number of plainclothesmen to the club led to a cancellation of the protest. Friends and relatives of the four youths sentenced to imprisonment last month have received the KGB's "last warning" against further protest.

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NOTES

Jordan-Israel: Jordan is again threatening to call for a UN Security Council meeting on the Jerusalem problem. In an evident attempt to move the US to press the Israelis to discontinue making changes in the status of Jerusalem, Jordanian Prime Minister Talhouni told the US ambassador on 19 February that his government can only hold off such a call "for a few more days." Talhouni also claims he is under pressure to request Egypt to station aircraft in Jordan as a deterrent to further Israeli air strikes, but such a move seems unlikely at this time.

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USSR: The Soviets yesterday launched their third navigation satellite in three months. The first Soviet satellite related to this program was launched more than six years after the first launch of a US navigation satellite. The present rate of firings, however, indicates that Moscow probably is now giving high priority to this project. Navigation satellites transmit data enabling surface ships and submarines equipped with special receivers to calculate their positions precisely.

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Bahamas: General elections seem likely, following the death of a government member of the House of Assembly. The district he represented is a marginal one, where Premier Pindling's government is reluctant to risk losing its one-vote legislative majority by calling a by-election. The all-Negro government, on the other hand, expects to make substantial gains in a general election at the expense of the white-dominated United Bahamian Party. Pindling's demand for increased autonomy from Great Britain will be an important election issue.

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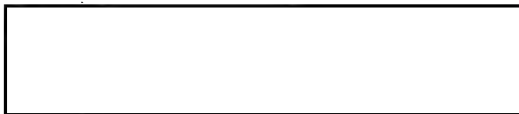
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